

Message Text

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ACTION SNM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 AGRE-00 DEAE-00
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OES-09 OMB-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 PA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2942
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

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S/NM FOR RICHARD GIBSON; DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS USDA
ELECTRONICALLY

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: SNAR, TU, US
SUBJ: ANNOUNCEMENTS OF VISIT OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TO U.S.
AND POPPY CAPSULE PURCHASE PRICES

SUMMARY: GOT MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE HAS ANNOUNCED PLANS TO
VISIT THE U.S. AND DISCUSS, INTER ALIA, ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL
SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR LICIT OPIATES. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT,
OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF AUGUST 10 CARRIED LISTING OF POPPY CAPSULE
PURCHASE PRICES FOR 1978 CROP. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR A THREE-WEEK VISIT TO GENEVA, THE
NETHERLANDS, AND THE U.S., MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND
LIVESTOCK MEHMET YUCELER ISSUED A STATEMENT AND SPOKE TO THE
PRESS ABOUT HIS VISIT.

-- ON AUGUST 7, THE DAY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE, YUCELER GAVE
A BRIEF STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA INDICATING THAT HE IS VISITING THE
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U.S. AS THE GUEST OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO DISCUSS VARIOUS
AGRICULTURAL ISSUES AND TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON WORLD SUPPLY AND
DEMAND FOR POPPY STRAW AND ITS DERIVATIVES.

-- DURING A SHORT LAYOVER IN ISTANBUL ON HIS WAY TO GENEVA ON
AUGUST 8, YUCELER TOLD NEWSMEN HE WOULD BE MEETING WITH OFFICIALS
FROM THE U.N. FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL IN GENEVA. ACCORDING

TO THE PRESS, HE ADDED THE FOLLOWING:

" AS YOU KNOW, SUSPICIONS WERE RAISED INITIALLY WHEN TURKEY RESUMED POPPY CULTIVATION IN 1974. THESE DOUBTS, HOWEVER, WERE FOUND TO BE GROUNDLESS, AS TURKEY TOOK PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES ALONG WITH THE RESUMPTION OF POPPY CULTIVATION. THUS, THE FIRST ECEVIT GOVERNMENT PROVED TO BE RIGHT IN PERMITTING THE RESUMPTION OF POPPY CULTIVATION WHICH CONSTITUTES SUCH AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INCOME FOR THE TURKISH FARMER. WHILE CONTINUING TO PROTECT THE FARMER, OUR GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO TAKEN ALL PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT THE TRANSFORMATION OF OPIUM INTO CONTRABAND WHICH THREATENS HUMAN HEALTH.

" DURING OUR TRIP, WE SHALL ENGAGE IN STUDIES AND ATTEND MEETINGS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL POPPY CULTIVATION AND PROCESSING. IN ADDITION, WE WILL EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE IN THE U.S. ON ISSUES OF COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE RESEARCH. I WILL ALSO HAVE MEETINGS IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IN HOLLAND PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE FOR THE U.S."

2. THE MEDIA GAVE THE STORY BROAD, BUT SECONDARY COVERAGE ON AUGUST 8 AND 9. WE HAVE NOT SEEN ANY EDITORIAL COMMENT, ALTHOUGH YUCELER MADE IT CLEAR TO THE PRESS THAT THE MAJOR PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT IS TO DISCUSS ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR LICIT OPIATES.

3. COMMENT: IN THE PLANNING STAGES OF HIS VISIT TO THE U.S., LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MINAGRICULTURE YUCELER EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS TO US ABOUT HIGHLIGHTING THE NARCOTICS ASPECTS OF HIS TRIP BECAUSE OF CONCERN THAT THE TURKISH PUBLIC MIGHT MISINTERPRET ITS PURPOSE. JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE, HOWEVER, YUCELER DECIDED TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE PUBLIC THAT HIS VISIT IS RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL OPIATE SUPPLY AND DEMAND ISSUES.

4. WE BELIEVE THIS CHANGE IS A RESULT OF GREATER GOT CONFIDENCE THAT IT IS ON TOP OF THE ENFORCEMENT ASPECTS OF ITS CONTROL PROGRAM AND THAT DIVERSION FROM LICIT PRODUCTION HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY PREVENTED. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOT HAS JUST RECENTLY RECOGNIZED PROBLEM OF WORLD OVERSUPPLY OF RAW MATERIALS FOR OPIATES AND IS HOPING U.S. CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION ON PROGRAMS TO HELP IT TRY TO MATCH SUPPLY AND DEMAND REQUIREMENTS.

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5. OFFICIAL GAZETTE ANNOUNCEMENTS ON AUGUST 10 OF PURCHASE PRICES FOR 1978 CROP OF POPPY CAPSULES SEEMS TO BE FIRST STEP TOWARD REDUCED CROP IN 1979. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL GAZETTE, SOIL PRODUCTS OFFICE (TMO) WILL OFFER FARMERS TOP PRICES OF TURKISH LIRA 25 PER KILO FOR WINTER PLANTED AND TURKISH LIRA 19 PER KILO FOR SPRING PLANTED POPPIES. TOP PURCHASE PRICE FOR ALL POPPY CAPSULES LAST SEASON WAS TURKISH LIRA 23. WITH INFLATION RATE RUNNING HIGHER THAN FORTY PERCENT OVER THE PAST YEAR, MINIMAL INCREASE IN PURCHASE PRICE THIS YEAR REPRESENTS NET DECLINE FOR FARMERS. PRICES, HOWEVER, ARE STILL NOT UNATTRACTIVE. A SIDE BENEFIT OF THE TWO LEVEL PRICING SYSTEM ANNOUNCED ON AUGUST 10 IS THAT TMO WILL PROBABLY PAY APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AMOUNT OF LIRA FOR POPPY CAPSULES PURCHASES IN 1978 AS IT DID IN 1977.

6. WE HAVE ALSO LEARNED FROM TMO OFFICIALS THAT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IS SEEKING A GOVERNMENT DECREE REDUCING TOTAL PLANTING AREA FROM WHICH EACH FARMER MAY BE LICENSED. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THE GOT HAS NOT YET AGREED ON INDIVIDUAL PLANTING AREA, BUT TMO HAS RECOMMENDED THAT IT BE REDUCED FROM FIVE TO TWO DECARES PER LICENSE.

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7. WE BELIEVE HOLDING THE LINE ON POPPY CAPSULE PURCHASE PRICES AND POSSIBLE REDUCTION IN AREA EACH FARMER MAY LICENSE REPRESENT IMPORTANT STEPS AS GOT BEGINS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH ITS OVERPRODUCTION PROBLEM. IN THIS CONTEXT, YUCELER VISIT PRESENTS VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR U.S. TO SHARE BENEFITS OF OUR

AGRICLUTURAL EXPERIENCE AND TO SHOW SUPPORTIVE INTEREST IN GOT
PROBLEM. DILLON

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